

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request for environmental information. We appreciate your interest, and we want to let you know that your request has been carefully considered in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

I would like to request a record of the number of instances in United Utilities supply area that have exceeded legal safety thresholds in the time scale since April 2020 and April 2025. Please include lab results showing:

- **The date of detection**
- **Type of contaminant**
- **Measured concentration (standardised to micrograms per litre)**
 - **Please also include any instances that caused:**
 - **An internal investigation Site Inspection**
 - **Potential health risk review/warning Notification to public health safety.**
- **Please include pre-treatment and post-treatment readings.**
- **Please include the percentage of flora and fauna affected.**

Water companies collect samples daily from, but not limited to, water treatment works (WTW), service reservoirs (SRs) and customer properties. Samples are analysed in a laboratory to confirm that the water quality meets requirements in the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016. Within these regulations, there is a list of parameters which companies must monitor for, where the monitoring should occur (e.g. at a WTW) and the maximum level which is acceptable in drinking water. These levels are known as a Prescribed Concentration Value (PCV) or, more simply, the 'regulatory standard' or 'legal limit'. A full list of the parameters that water companies must monitor for, including PCVs, can be found on the Drinking Water Inspectorate's website by following this link: [Drinking Water Standards and Regulations - Drinking Water Inspectorate](#). It is worthy to note that PCVs are set based on several factors and most exceedances of the regulatory standard would not be considered a risk to health.

Where there is an exceedance of the regulatory standard, a full source to tap investigation is carried out including, but not limited to, obtaining resamples from appropriate locations, onsite investigations by field staff and carrying out a review of water quality and online data. Where a root cause is identified, action is taken to rectify the issue and customers are advised how to prevent an occurrence where the cause is related to the customer's own internal plumbing.

Where there is a potential risk to health, we take a risk-based approach and carry out a public health risk assessment. A public health risk assessment is informed by available sample results including

those that exceed the regulatory standard, information from customers, onsite investigations carried out by field staff and online water quality trends, where appropriate.

Most water quality exceedances experienced by water companies do not pose a risk to public health, but where there is a concern, we may issue precautionary restriction of use advice to customers, even if we haven't had confirmation that the water supply is contaminated. We do this to protect our customers whilst further investigations are carried out. There are three types of precautionary Restriction of Use advice that can be issued, based upon the output of the public health risk assessment. The three types of advice are included in the below table.

Type of Advice	Explanation
Do Not Use	Customers are advised, as a precautionary measure, not to use their tap water for: drinking, cooking, preparing food, cleaning teeth, showering, bathing, or washing wounds. They can still use water for flushing toilets.
Do Not Drink	Customers are advised, as a precautionary measure, not to use their tap water for: drinking, cooking, preparing food, cleaning teeth, or washing wounds. They can still use water for flushing toilets and bathing.
Boil Water	Customers are advised, as a precautionary measure, to boil their tap water and let it cool before using it for: drinking, cooking, preparing food, cleaning teeth, or washing wounds until further notice. The water can be used as normal for flushing toilets and bathing.

Where we issue precautionary restriction of use advice to customers, we notify the Drinking Water Inspectorate and every appropriate local authority and UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). This is a requirement of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016 and the Water Industry (Suppliers' Information) Direction 2024.

We have therefore interpreted your request with this in mind and have provided a summary of the situations where there was potential of a contaminant present, or evidence that a contaminant was present, which is not normally present in the water supply. In these circumstances, advice was issued to the relevant customers, the majority of time, on a precautionary basis whilst additional investigations were carried out, or where we supported the customer to resolve issues with their internal plumbing.

There have been 69 occasions, between 2020 and 2024, where United Utilities have issued precautionary advice to customers. Of the 69 occasions, 56 were identified as associated with a private issue either with the customer's private pipework or activities. The vast majority of these occasions were associated with a single property or a handful of properties. We have included a summary for each of these occasions in a spreadsheet which accompanies our response.

Please note that the data within the accompanying spreadsheet is from the initial samples taken from a property. We do not take pre and post treatment samples from customer properties, therefore in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR we are unable to provide you with a copy of these as they do not exist.

With regards to the wastewater aspect of your request, I can confirm that there are no 'legal safety thresholds' therefore in line with Regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIR, I am unable to provide you with any information relating to these, as they do not exist. There is however sample data available on the Environment Agency website here: [Open WIMS data](#), which I hope you find useful. Additionally, please note that where there is risk to flora and fauna i.e. a discharge, United Utilities report self-report these as pollution incidents to the Environment Agency.

We hope that this response answers your request. However, if you're not satisfied with how we've

handled it, you can request an internal review. To do this, please write to us at Environmental Information Office, Haweswater House, Lingley Mere, Warrington, WA5 3LP or email us at EIRRequests@uuplc.co.uk, addressing your request to [REDACTED], and explaining why you're unhappy with our response. We'll be very happy to review your request and ensure we've done everything we can to assist you.

Any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this response, and we will reply within 40 working days from receipt of the request for internal review.

Many thanks
EIR Team

We'd love to hear your feedback on how we handled your request! If you have a moment, please complete our short survey [here](#) – your input helps us improve our service.